E/MSS Frequently Asked Questions

ABOUT EMPLOYEE/MEMBER SELF SERVICE

1) WHAT IS EMPLOYEE/MEMBER SELF SERVICE (E/MSS)?

Employee/Member Self Service is an innovative automated system that puts Department of Defense employees/members in control of processing certain discretionary pay data without using paper forms.

2) WHY USE EMPLOYEE/MEMBER SELF SERVICE?

It saves time - E/MSS eliminates the need for completing and submitting forms by replacing them with user-friendly technology.

It is convenient - Employees/Members can access E/MSS 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for changing or reviewing current information.

It is reliable - E/MSS has the same procedural checks for accuracy as paper forms.

3) HOW IS EMPLOYEE/MEMBER SELF SERVICE ACCESSED?

The system can be accessed by touch-tone phone and the Internet. For security reasons, cellular phones are not recommended.

4) WHEN IS EMPLOYEE/MEMBER SELF SERVICE AVAILABLE?

E/MSS is available nearly 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

5) WHAT TRANSACTIONS CAN BE PERFORMED?

A variety of discretionary payroll transactions can be made. Here are the transactions which will be available in phase 1: Financial Allotments (not applicable to annuitants), Direct Deposits, Federal Taxes and Home Address.

6) WHEN ARE THE ACTIONS MADE EFFECTIVE?

Upon completion and acceptance of an action, E/MSS will display a "NO LATER THAN" date. You may verify the change to your account by accessing E/MSS three to seven business days after a change has been made.

7) HOW DOES AN EMPLOYEE/MEMBER KNOW THE TRANSACTION WAS PROCESSED?

In keeping with streamlining efforts and to reduce paper, E/MSS takes advantage of existing technology and is paperless, and no written confirmation will be received. The change you have made to your account should be posted no later than 7 business days after you make the change. At that time, you can access E/MSS and verify that your account reflects your change. If your change is not reflected on your account, contact your customer service representative.

For active duty and reserve members, and civilians, you may check your Leave and Earnings Statement to verify that your change was processed.

For retirees, if you input a change to your Allotments or Federal Tax Withholding Amount, you will receive a Retiree Account Statement in the mail reflecting the change in your net pay.

For annuitants, you will receive a pay statement in the mail each time there is a change made to your account.

8) WHEN I CHANGE MY HOME ADDRESS, WILL IT AFFECT THE ADDRESS OF BONDS THAT ARE SENT TO MY HOME?

For civilian personnel, an address on a bond that is identical to your home address may automatically change when the home address is changed. Check with your servicing payroll office to verify the address where your bonds are to be mailed. For all other Employees/Members, a change in your home address will not affect the address of your bonds.

9) I AM IN A TAX EXEMPT STATUS, HOW DOES THIS AFFECT CHANGES I WISH TO MAKE TO MY FEDERAL TAXES?

For civilian employees, if you have filed a W4 to be in a tax exempt status you will not be allowed to make federal tax changes.

For all military members and retirees, E/MSS allows federal tax exemption changes.

10) WHEN I ENTER AN AMOUNT IN THE FEDERAL TAX WITHHOLDING AMOUNT BLOCK, HOW MUCH MONEY WILL BE DEDUCTED FROM MY PAY EACH PAYDAY?

If you are a civilian employee, the total amount you enter will be deducted each payday. For other members, the amount you enter will be deducted each month, (one-half each payday for those who have two paydays per month).

11) WHO CAN CHANGE FINANCIAL ALLOTMENTS?

At this time, all active Marine Corps members, all military retirees, and all civilians can change their financial/discretionary allotments. Financial allotments do not pertain to annuitants. Other military members will be able to change financial allotments in the future.

12) IS THERE A MAXIMUM AMOUNT TO WHICH I CAN INCREASE A FINANCIAL ALLOTMENT?

E/MSS will allow eligible employees/members to increase a financial allotment to any amount as long as it will not exceed the amount of available net pay.

13) HOW MANY FINANCIAL ALLOTMENTS MAY I START?

For civilian employees, E/MSS will allow an employee to start a maximum of two financial allotments. Overseas allotments will be addressed in a future phase. Other employees/members authorized to have allotments deducted from their pay are limited by DoD regulations in the number of allotments they may start.

14) WHAT SHOULD AN EMPLOYEE/MEMBER DO IF HE/SHE LATER DETERMINES THEIR CHANGE WAS INCORRECT, OR WAS NOT THE CHANGE THEY INTENDED TO MAKE?

Employees/Members MUST use the same method as previously used to make the change; either Employee/Member Self Service, or the paper form, but not both.

SYSTEM SECURITY

15) HOW SAFE IS THE SYSTEM?

The unique combination of SSN, PIN, and a DOD-specific telephone number for IVR needed to access E/MSS makes it very secure. E/MSS employees/members must use a browser with Secure Socket Layer (SSL) protocol with 128-bit encryption software (strong encryption). This combination prevents information from being retrieved during transmission.

16) WHAT BROWSERS CAN BE USED TO ACCESS THIS SITE?

Currently, Netscape Navigator version 3.0, 4.01 or later; Microsoft Internet Explorer version 4.0 or later; and Netscape Communicator are being used.

17) CAN I USE THE BROWSER PROVIDED BY MY INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER?

If you are using a Web browser provided by your Internet service provider or on-line service, the full security capabilities of Employee/Member Self Service may not be utilized. A few examples of service providers are America On-Line, Prodigy, CompuServe, and The Microsoft Network. We recommend that you use the official Microsoft Internet Explorer available from WWW.MICROSOFT.COM or Netscape Navigator available from WWW.NETSCAPE.COM. Employee/Member Self Service only supports browsers with JavaScript and strong encryption enabled.

18) WHAT IS 128 BIT ENCRYPTION?

In order to use the E/MSS Web site, you must use a Web browser that supports Secure Socket Layers (SSL) protocol with 128 bit encryption software (strong encryption) and JavaScript enabled. This prevents information from being read by others on the Internet while it is being transmitted between your Web browser and the Employee/Member Self Service Web site. We recommend that you use the Netscape Navigator version 3.0, 4.01 or higher; or Microsoft Internet Explorer version 4.0, or higher.

19) HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE 128 BIT ENCRYPTION?

See your system administrator, check the manual, use the help option, or call/e-mail your Internet provider for support.

20) WHERE CAN I GET A 128 BIT BROWSER?

Microsoft Internet Explorer is available from WWW.MICROSOFT.COM; Netscape Navigator is available from WWW.NETSCAPE.COM.

21) HOW DO I ENABLE JAVASCRIPT?

For all browsers, see your system administrator, check the manual, use the help option, or call/e-mail your Internet provider for support.

22) WHAT IS CACHE/CACHING?

Browsers typically store/save/cache pages displayed on your monitor to your hard disk. Caching can allow others to see your personal information if they have access to your machine. When you are operating in the SSL mode, this automatic saving, or caching, can be turned off. You should always verify caching is turned off before using Employee/Member Self Service.

AFTER GETTING TO THE SITE

23) I SEE ONLY A "NO" BUTTON; WHY DON'T I SEE A "YES" BUTTON?

If you do not see a button that says YES and a green check mark, your browser does not support 128 bit SSL encryption. If you are unable to use 128 bit encryption, use the E/MSS Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS).

24) WHY DOES THE ATTENTION PAGE POP UP AND GO AWAY QUICKLY?

This is normal with E/MSS, your browser supports JavaScript. It pops up and goes away because there is a graphic on the page which takes a few seconds to load. If the attention page stays there and does not go away, it is because JavaScript is not enabled. E/MSS only supports browsers with JavaScript and strong encryption enabled.

25) WHEN I SELECT MY ACCOUNT, NOTHING HAPPENS. WHY?

You have to select the blue button rather than the account name.

26) WHY ISN'T MY PAY SYSTEM LISTED?

The pay system that services your account does not currently support Employee/Member Self Service, or your account is not currently active.

27) WHY CAN'T I ENTER MY FULL SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER?

Dashes and special characters are not allowed. Type only the numbers in your Social Security Number.

28) I AM A MACINTOSH USER, WHY DO I SEE ONLY BLACK?

You must tell the browser that the background should be light not dark.

29) WHY DO I KEEP GETTING A "DOMAIN NOT FOUND" ERROR?

Check that you are typing the URL (location) correctly. Also, there could be a problem with the domain service, or the connection link you are using.

ABOUT PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

30) WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED TO USE EMPLOYEE/MEMBER SELF SERVICE?

In order to access E/MSS, an employee/member needs his/her Social Security Number (SSN) and Personal Identification Number (PIN). Depending on the transaction, employees/members will need additional information. The E/MSS system provides instructions on-line, or the servicing payroll office or customer service representative can provide additional information.

31) HOW DOES AN EMPLOYEE/MEMBER GET A PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN)?

A temporary PIN will be mailed to you. After you sign on initially, you will be required to customize your PIN for future use.

32) CAN THE PIN BE CHANGED?

To change your PIN, you will need to select the Change PIN Option from the Main Menu. You will be required to enter your New PIN twice.